

William Mavrode

M1: Testing. Today is May 17th. Kiki and I will be interviewing Bill Mavrode.

Q: We will start with, where did your family come from in Greece?

A: My father came from [Stamnicha Laconea?], and my mother was from Sparta, [Elebetzaba?].

Q: And what prompted them to come to this country?

A: Well, my mother's people were here, and they were in New York City by Battery Park, where Ellis Island was, and my mother's people had a little grocery store and coffee -- I mean [cafenio?]-like. And when everybody came off the boat, they always went there first, it was like a big meeting place. It was 26 Washington Street, New York City. By Battery Park.

Q: So your parents came here. How did they get from going to your mother's relatives to Newark?

A: [Simpeteria?]. Somebody introduced my father to my mother, my mother was six years old when she came, my father was 13 years old.

Q: All right. And who introduced them? In other words, your father was in Newark --

A: My father was in Newark.

Q: How do you get to Newark?

A: Who, my father?

Q: Right.

A: OK. My father's family came to Lowell, Massachusetts. They had the tanneries at that time, and my grandfather was up there with his two daughters. Julia Poulis and Margaret [Garnis?]. That was the only three children my grandfather had. And then they left, they had the depressions, and they left Lowell, Massachusetts -- the mills all started closing down, the leather factories. And they came to Newark, which a lot of them did. A lot of the Greeks that were there all came from Lowell, Massachusetts. They were up there working the tannery. So my grandfather came down here, then my father came over when he was 13 years old, and he came to Newark. At that time, my father went to school, he went to Warren Street School. He went to Central Avenue School. And then my aunt Julia, his older sister, married Chris Poulis, who was Peter Key Hayes' mother-in-law. (inaudible) Chris Poulis' brother and his son were on 355 J Street in Brooklyn, New York, big time in the greens business, wholesale florist. Well, Chris and his other brother, Peter, were in Newark, on 85 New Street. The other brother

Peter died younger, that was Dr. Peter Poulis' father -- [Spearo?] Poulis, Katherine, and George. And Jenny Poulis was the mother, they lived on the third floor. Well, at the same time, my father started helping his brother-in-law with the greens business, the florist business. In the meantime, depression again in the early thirties, and they lost everything. Peter died, Peter Poulis died -- Jenny Poulis' husband -- and Chris, they lost everything. They were in Newark.

Q: Right. When did they get to Newark, what year did they get to Newark?

A: I don't remember.

Q: You don't remember, what --

A: In the twenties. Late twenties.

Q: All right. And what year did they come to the United States? Your father...

A: My father was thirteen years old, and he was born in 1906.

Q: OK, so early 19 --

A: '19 or something like that, in 1900's. And my mother was six years old. She came in the middle twenties. And then Poulis lost everything with the depression and all that there, so my father went to work for Washington Florist --

which was also Old Man [William Joyce?] was my cousin, Mary Poulis, who is Alan Key Hayes' sister -- was her godfather. Old Man William. Anyway, what happened, is my father worked for them for a while, in the flower business. And at that time, the only greens that they used was laurel. And any place you went in Jersey, before all the suburbia stuff, was laurel all over. So one day they kidding said to my father, "John, go get your license," he says, "we'll give you an old truck if you pick laurel in between for us." You know, they used (inaudible), you know what I'm talking about. So anyway, he says "All right," so he did. So finally he worked for them for a while. My uncle Chris now, he's devastated, they lost their business and everything, so he started going buying buses back and forth to Brooklyn helping his brother and his nephews over there -- was Gus Poulis & Co. So anyway, my father started doing it on his own. The greens business and so on and so forth. And somebody (inaudible) I don't know who it was -- to my father and my mother. And they got married in New York. And then they came to Newark, and my grandfather was all the time going and wheeling and dealing with them too. They bought a house on 356 south 19th Street, corner of 13th Avenue and 19th Street, where the two cemeteries come between Rogue Street

and 19th Avenue. The place is still standing, and it was a corner property, and it had half the block.

Q: 13th and 19th.

A: Anyway, so they put up a cinderblock building with a little cooler and everything like that. And my father started going around to all the stores, selling greens, picking greens and this and that, that's how they -- what do you call -- and then upstairs in that house, my aunt Margaret (inaudible) got married, and they lived on the second floor, we lived on the first floor, it was a big house, and my father did the greens business, and so on and so forth. While he done really well. After that, a New York, New York restaurant, [Toutoulis?] opened in Elizabeth. Well, they were [kupari?] with my aunt Margaret's husband, and he was their head chef when they opened up over there. Well, it was kind of hard for that man to get on a bus from 19th Street to go to Elizabeth. You know, from --

M1: (inaudible).

A: So anyway, what happened is, they moved from upstairs on 19th Street, and they went to Sterling Street, between Howard and High Street, across from where [Lahakis?] lived. Well anyway, that's what happened there, and it progressed, and my father, at that time in Newark, on New Street,

Washington Street, Arch Street, Orleans Street and Plains Street, there was like 15, 20 wholesale florist. Yeah, at that time there was quite a few wholesale florists, now there is only one, Mower.

Q: Where they Greek or not?

A: No.

Q: No, none of them?

A: No.

M1: Muller's still there today though.

A: He's 93 years old, I talked to him this morning, he drives me crazy, but anyway -- Muller wasn't there, Muller came in 1941. So my father started supplying the wholesalers with greens. They bought greens and then they sold them to the retailer. When my father was across the street on Warren Place, there was a guy on a corner there, Mar [Schunholz?], a new wholesale florist. Across the street was 85 New Street, that was the building that Chris Poulis owned. And lost, he was my father's brother-in-law. Jenny Poulis still lives on the second floor, and her sister, [Kula Peresos?]. She lived on the second floor. The first floor was vacant, and the story went downstairs-like, you know, the old basement-type store. So my father was unloading greens on a corner there -- this was a 1938, '39. And this little old

man comes down. His name was Edward Arnold, I remember the name. He was a banker -- at that time, you know, handshaking --

Q: That was it.

A: -- so he comes down the street, and he's sitting there, looking at the building, 85. Well, he's the one that had to foreclose (inaudible) he had it. So you see, my father crossed the street and he hells over "Hey John!" My father like "Oh, Mr. Arnold," my father knew him, you know. He says, "John, why don't you buy this building?" My father says, "Well," he says, "I have the other places, this and that," he says. "And right now we are doing fine." He says this and that. He says, "John, I want you to have this building." At that time, for \$1,000. He says, "I'm going to let you have that building, John, and whatever you can pay me every month is fine. I want you to have that building. I want you to come down here and move in here with the (inaudible)." So my father took them up on it, and we went on the set, and the thing that was open on the second floor was like a downstairs basement store and then the second floor was like a big store, and the others was two apartments upstairs, in which the Poulis' lived and the [Resos'?). So my father had this guy -- Steve, black guy,

very carpenter-oriented, this and that. He went in there and he decked the whole place and made a nice apartment. So we took and we moved from 19 Street. We rented that house up on 19 Street, and the garages where he made for the business, and we moved to New Street, and that's how I got on New Street, but we still had the other place. So we stayed at New Street, and he put in flowers and everything. The guys he was selling greens to, he put flowers in to give them competition now.

M1: What year was this?

A: 1939, 1940. '39, '40. And finally, things were very, very good. Things were tough for everybody, but they were thriving pretty good, with the farm upstate in New York, so on and so forth. Chris Poulis came to work for my father --

Q: Where did you buy the farm in upstate New York?

A: Harvard, New York. That's -- in fact, Michael just pulled in, he just came from there. Anyway -- because years ago, the only greens that was available, and a lot of funeral work at that time, everyone had funeral work. It was laurel and ferns. So my father used to have -- like we've got the Mexicans now -- up in Harvard, New York, across the street was another house, and my mother's uncle, Bill [Buckle McHighes?], who was the one from Williams Street, the old

lady, you remember? (inaudible) brother, he was living up there with this woman, and he had like a boarding house. \$2 a week -- \$1 a week lunch, breakfast and sleep. My father used to bring up about 15, 20 Greeks out of New York, and they used to go into the woods and pick ferns. And he had made a warehouse, and we stored them, and took them out through the winter. So that's how that all got going. So anyway, the war came on. And he had Chris Poulis there, and he had Mickey [Moulasakis?], you remember Mickey [Moulasakis?]? That was my father's cousin.

Q: Wow.

A: It was really doing the job on my part, they were -- you know what I'm saying.

Q: Isn't that sad, that this is what happened?

A: Yeah. Anyway, so what happened is -- so Mickey could stay out of the army, he had to get a defense job. So he went to work driving a steel truck for Igor Steel. Igor Brothers at that time, out of the port. So while my father was tired and my mother was tired --

Q: Excuse me, is this Northport?

A: Yeah, yeah. They was very tired, day and night, day and night. So he takes on Louis [Sakalakis?], who was married to Katherine [Karabatos?].

M1: Bartender.

A: Yeah, he was a bartender.

M1: (multiple conversations; inaudible) cousin.

A: The old lady [Sakalakis?] was (inaudible).

M1: I didn't know that.

A: So anyway, Louis married Katie [Karabatos?]. Johnny Wolf was (inaudible) gambling crap and all the stuff like that.

M1: This is Mike Karabatos' father?

A: Mike died.

Q: Yeah, you have to tell me about the [Kathenia?] while you're on this.

A: I'm going to tell you, don't worry, I ended up on a...

Q: You're going to do what you're going to do all on your own. OK, go ahead.

A: So anyway, what happened is, my father -- "You know," he says, "We're tired, this and that." He made a lot of money. So he says, "Listen." It started getting really hairy with the war and everything, doing business, but with the trucks and this and that. So he says to Louis, he says, "Listen John." My father said, "Louis." Because Louis was on the funny side before he married Katie. He said, "Look, why don't you settle down, he said I'll give you the business."

Q: What does it mean, the funny side?

A: Well, the [capenia?], you know all his good time, the horse-playing and the gambling and all that. So what happened was, he says, "Well John, maybe John will stop his baloney, he'll come here and we'll be partners." My father says, "OK," he says, "I'll sell you the business and the trucks. You know the business Louis." "Yeah," he said, "OK." He says, "I'm going to go upstate and just concentrate on greens, and I'll sell you what I'll sell a few other wholesalers in New York, and kind of slow down a little bit, because (inaudible)." He says, "OK, I ain't going to sell you the buildings though. You pay me rent." He says, "We'll move out of the apartment, you can move in the apartment." They were living on West Market Street, all together there (inaudible). So he says, "OK," so that's what happened. Their [kumparo?], Louis' [kumparo?] (inaudible) had the bar on Plain Street. Boulevard Bar.

M1: Yeah yeah, Boulevard Bar.

A: He was Gus.

M1: I know who you are talking about, yeah.

A: Yeah, anyway. [Sampatakos?]. So he says "No John, I'm going to lend him the money, they'll pay you off, don't worry, everything's fine." OK. So we went up to 13th

Avenue and 19th Street. My father renovated the whole house, made the whole house a one-family. Bought everything new and everything. So we stayed there for a while, and he was just doing what he was doing upstate New York. So finally he says, "You know what, it's getting kind of hairy around here." So he decides to sell 19th Street, and we all moved up on the farm. In 1943, something like that.

M1: So this is New York?

A: Yeah, upstate New York. It's 150 miles from New York. So anyway, we all moved up there, but I never knew a summer in the city. From when I was born 'til -- every summer we spent upstate New York because that was the busiest time with harvesting certain greens to put away for storage, and we never came back to [Witiko?], so we knew everybody up there. We went up there -- we went to school up there. Used to walk from here to the school bus. We went to school up there, Downsville, New York. That's near Walter, New York. [Ponianta?], that area.

Q: Oh yeah.

A: OK. So anyway, we stayed there for a few years. The war ended. These guys here, [Batos?] and Wolf picked up their old habits again.

(break in audio)

A: OK. So anyway, next thing you know, our father started calling the customers. He says, "These guys don't have product, this and that, the trucks are falling apart," stuff like that. They started their own racetrack business. So finally my father says to them, "Listen." They start getting behind on commitments and stuff like that. So they said to my father, one day, and he says to them, "Listen. If you don't like it, here's the keys and we are gone."

M1: This is Wolf and...

A: [Karambatos?] and [Sikalakis?], Louis, who was Gus [Sapatakos?] at the Boulevard Bar.

Q: I'm going to stop you one minute. Peter, make sure -- because he's talking to you, and he shouldn't be.

A: OK. Well anyway.

Q: I wanted to make sure that --

A: Yeah, OK, so anyway, what happened is, this was a 1947. '48, right after the war. So anyway, my father says "OK, put the trucks over there." He says, "We sold the trucks." My father trusted them. He says, "What do you mean you sold the trucks?" He says, "Well, they went bankrupt." [Sapatakos?] made a paper out that they borrowed money off them against the trucks, so we got stuck. So at that time, my father says, "OK, no problem." He went upstairs, they

moved out of the apartment -- because he sold 19th Street. And he went down, and he refurnished it. And he says, "Well, I guess I'm going to have to go down there and salvage everything -- whatever we can." So at that time I left school. I was going to high school up there, and we went down, and we moved in the apartment upstairs -- we kept upstate New York and everything, but we moved down back to Newark again. So I had just gotten my driver's license too. Anyway, we knew the business, we knew the routes and everything, so we went around to all our customers, said, "Listen." They said, "Yeah we know, John, you made a mistake three, four years ago. We thought these people were fine and this and that, and this is what they did." In fact, Johnny Gregorio, who is the mayor of Linden, they had a big -- we grew up together. His father had one of the gorgeous flower shops in Staten Island, he was a bookmaker, and he was hooked up with these guys. So anyway, we went down there, we had a (inaudible) we had to get new trucks again, we went out and bought trucks. And that wasn't easy that time. (inaudible) my grandfather. He always lived with us, and he stayed in the store, my mother stayed in the store. And I used to go out on the routes. Get up and go to New York and buy flowers, come back and this and that. We took -- Gus [Jenak?] Muller was in the picture. Your

brother-in-law, Gus, went to work for Muller. So then I took [Spearo?] Poulis. Not the one that died -- my cousin --

M1: [Downis Sure?].

A: Yeah, Downis Sure. And he ran one truck, I ran another truck, and we had George [Kefalis?] too. We showed him -- we gave him the simple stuff because we was going along fine. Everything was fine -- we had our tough times, you know -- so we remained in Newark. Anyway, we had our problems with the other guy. You know who I'm talking about. I was playing games with the draft-board. My father at that time -- we had a lot of family problems with my brother. Everything was up, it was down, it was up, it was down. The money that he spent, all his stuff like that, you're fixing things up all the time, so finally I did what I could, but I was never getting -- (inaudible) nigger, know what I'm talking about? Trying to do what I could...

Q: I won't say that...

A: No, but you know what I'm saying.

Q: Of course I do.

A: Yeah, so anyway. In the meantime, finally, the reserve corps that I was in got activated (inaudible) guarantee you you're going to stay here a while, you know what I mean? So

I said, well, I had to go. They didn't take care of the business, they closed it.

M1: What year is this now?

Q: This is 1950, '51.

M1: Korea.

Q: Yeah. So they closed the business, put the trucks in the parking lot across the street, and they put up state, New York. Still had the apartment there -- Mrs. Poulis was upstairs, she was paying rent, the other was paying rent, the other was paying rent. They were upstairs, upstate doing the greens business. The other guys here and there. So finally, well, I had to go to the army. The hell was I going to do. So I went to the army. They closed it, they closed everything. The business. Just what they were doing upstate, making it that way. So when I got out, after I seen what was going on, I didn't want no more part of anything that we were doing, you know? So in the meantime, there was the parking lots on New Street and Washington Street next door. Well I got mixed up with them Jews over there, and I got involved, you know. Next thing you know, I had this friend of mine that used to work in a body shop, he used to work trucks and that -- he wanted to open up a place. So I said, "OK," so I helped him. We went up on

Camden Street. Between Fairmont Avenue, Camden Street and 13th Avenue, Rolo's Garage. Put up a building and everything like that, and I got involved with him too, I was doing this, this, that, I was into a lot of things. So then finally after that happened, I got tired with him, he was using me, all his stuff like this day and night. So finally I said, "All right." I had a couple of the trucks, and I would go out lilac-season, cut lilacs. I would go out Christmas-time, do Christmas stuff.

Q: And where did you do this?

A: In Newark. Out of Newark.

Q: No, I know, but where did you pick these things, where did you find the --

A: Oh, I knew the business, I know --

Q: I know you know the business, but in what area?

A: Oh, New Jersey...

Q: All of New Jersey?

A: All of New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, stuff like that, seasonal stuff. So anyway, finally the guy from New York, he was a millionaire, his name was Seymour P. [Gline?]. He owned a Redwall Garages in New York City. A very nice man. Single royal company, so on and so forth. So he says,

"Billy, this guy has got to go. It's going to be up to you now, you take care of it, I'm going to make you a partner." OK, so I stayed there. In the meantime, I had quite a few trucks that I used seasonally for my business. Around the corner from me on a corner there was a Wheelin's Drug Store. Grey building. Next door there was a company called Star Stationery. And they supplied all these Mom and Pop (inaudible) Barney's used to be on 22. Post, the hardware people was there. At that time they started building Paramis. Route 17, [Van Burger's?] had -- what do you call them -- they all had toy centers, toys were becoming a big thing. So I knew them people for a long time, since I was a little boy. So one day, one of them came in and he says, "I want to talk to you." OK, he used to park his car here. His name was G. [Schlessinger?], he was a part of the RNS group. He says, "Listen, all these trucks over there, I see them sitting there half the year." I say, "Yeah, they're mine." Now at that time I had a black family that lived on Wikoff Street. There was 13 of them, brothers and sisters. But the people were different then. I had them working a parking lot, attendants, and we had a little gas station there.

M1: How many trucks did you have at that time?

Q: I had five or six.

M1: Five or six trucks?

A: So anyway. He says to me, he says, "Listen, we're having a problem with Ernie." I said, "Why, what's the matter?" (inaudible) they brought him over from Israel, they were all concentration people. He says, "We got him on his feet, he bought a big home, and he was doing the delivery service for us." He says, "Now, he went and he rented a garage on the corner of Warren Street and High Street, used to be the auto body, and he rented that when ACME went out." (inaudible) he says, "And now he wants to double the rates." He'd put, say, five stops on a truck. You know, to make five deliveries. And he used to charge like 3%. If the load was \$8,000 total, he'd get \$320 out of it. \$240, right. So, he says, "He's getting cute with us, and he's trying to take our customers and that, and we see what's coming down and we can't go like that." So I said, "Let me talk to him." And I knew him well. He said, "I don't care for nobody." So I said, "All right, Ernie." He says, "Listen. Would you be interested to take that business over? You try it," he says, "and we'll give you 5%." I said OK. Now this was a building, you used to pull the trucks in, and the truck used to go up on the elevator. They would load it. So I got a

hold of my black boy and I said, "Listen. Let's get the cousins over here and we will work it around, we will see how the loads are, and we'll still do the parking lot business, because I had two parking lots, one across the street and another here." He says, "All right." So we got the trucks all ready, and we tried it out. Man, the money that was coming in was -- what, are you kidding? I used to pay them \$10 a day to the driver, gasoline was like \$0.13, \$0.14 -- how couldn't you make out? Sometimes a truck would go out twice and that truck would bring you \$500, \$600 for the day. One truck.

Q: And this was in the fifties?

A: Yeah. So anyway, I said, "OK." So we started doing that. We started in September, and I'm telling you, beside the other things (inaudible) for Christmas, I really made a lot of money, plus a few other ventures. So anyway, I was going good. Then I met her.

Q: Her, is Ronnie.

A: Yeah. OK, anyway. In the meantime, they came along --

Q: Who came along?

A: The city of Newark came along. And they were doing the reorganization of condemnation and all this stuff like that there. I knew we had to go. So my father in the meantime

was just freelancing the [capanio?], made me go pick laurel once in a while here and there, stuff like that.

Q: You still had [cafenia?].

A: No no, (inaudible). In between that time though, my brother was always mixed up with Johnny Wolf and them guys, and they had always with the coffee house, Johnny's Tavern, he wants to go bartend over there. Aroma Coffee, you know, where [Verbakas?]. . .there was a clan of them. So he got in a lot of trouble, and he had to do some time, and he got out, and oh, he's going to be good now. So finally in 1958, '59, he got married.

Q: He married...

A: He married [Zikorpulus?]. Alice. You remember her? She was married before and had her daughter. They were fine, they were good people. So he got mixed up -- him and Johnny Wolf opened up a [capanio?] on Washington Street, used to be a clothing store across from Esquire (inaudible) they had a [capanio?] upstairs. In the meantime (inaudible) 52 Market Street, where Thomas' restaurant was downstairs. That used to belong to a John [Kifalis?], no relation to any of the other [Kifalises?].

M1: There was the [Mouses?], wasn't there?

A: No, the [Mouses?] was down on Plain Street. Anyway, so John [Kifalis?] left and went to Greece. It was John Pathos, he had (inaudible) Aroma Coffee. Mike [Paropol?] was the (inaudible) and they had Johnny's Tavern too, at that time. So my brother George has really gone home for all this stuff, so the [Kifalis?], 52, these other guy got the place.

Q: 52?

A: 52 Market Street, corner of Plain Street on top of (inaudible) liquor store downstairs. So anyway, they had opened another one down the street to give competition.

M1: Around the corner?

A: No. On Washington and Market Street. There was an alley there. There was a bar there, and you used to go upstairs.

M1: Near the (inaudible).

A: Yeah. So anyway, what happened is, my brother says to me, "Listen." My father was hanging out with them too. My father (inaudible) tell me all these stories. I was busy with my own thing, I stayed busy. I didn't give a damn what they thought. So finally it got pretty hairy with them over there, so the one guy, Chris, that had the [Kifalis'?), the 52 Market Street, the owner owed me some money. I helped them out.

M1: (inaudible) Chris...

A: I don't know, [Kiperero?], he was a [Kiperero?]. Anyway, so finally I said to my brother, "Look. If you are going to be straight, and good, and stay away from all these other guys, to straighten out your situation, I'll go over there and throw him out of there." No no no no no, this and that. I said, "OK." So I went upstairs, and I said to him, "Listen," and he was talking a lot, this guy. So I said, "Come over here." We were in the back there, a little kitchen. I said, "Listen. Yeah that's right. You're going to either take this money and run, or I'm going to do something else." Like I got a little tough with him, you know. Well, he didn't know what to say. I said I'd take you, I'd throw you down the stairs.

M1: Yeah, I remember.

A: Well, anyway. I put some pressure on him. So finally he comes over, he said, "Listen, OK, I'll take the money and run." So I took him down to Nick [Saros?] on Beaver Street.

M1: Didn't I tell you the kids you expelled in Massachusetts weren't in here for punishment? This is Casey Glamos, this is --

(break in audio)

A: All right. So one part I left out, I just thought about it. So I got involved with the guys at the parking lot, then we

turned around and we leased it out. 1957. '57. So I had a bunch of money, and I had upstate New York, we were at Harvard, New York, very close to a friend of mine that had a [Nash Rambler?] agency. And gas stations in Livingston (inaudible) New York, which is 30 miles from the farm. Well, me and him used to do a little swapping back and forth, vehicles and stuff, all along. So he got into a divorce, he got into a lot of trouble. They were ready to close up on him. So I said "All right, I'm going to come up there, and I'm going to stay there with you. If I put money into the place, we can kind of build it out." So finally, after that, that was the time when I got George to come to Newark. I went to Nick [Saros?] and we drew up a paper, and I said to Nick, "Now you pay this guy, so you can be a witness, because I don't want to ever see you over there any more." And that was it, I took the keys, George closed the other place, I gave him the bill of sale for the place, I paid him so much more (inaudible) I gave him the keys, I figured this was a good way to keep him off of my back. It went fine, they became a big situation with them. So in the meantime, I was upstate New York with this guy with the what-do-you-call, and after a while it got --

Q: Quiet area?

A: No, busy, but it became a little hairy, and I said, "I'm not going to get involved any more, fuck, I lost a lot of money with that guy." But that's all right, you know, it's one of these things. So finally I came back down again, the guys left the parking lot, the lease was up, but I stayed there until they stored it as urban renewal thing, we got some more money out of them. My father had the building, which we had to play a lot of games with the city, they didn't want to give us so much, then he had to get a hold of the mayor at that time (inaudible) whose brother-in-law was in charge of that, and we gave it to this over there who was a broker, and he put down change of business -- we had to move, we had to go (inaudible) the business enough to make a difference. OK, well at that time I was married too. And I said, you know what, I still was doing that Star Stationery, that thing there really put me on my feet. The toy business. It was a toy business, and I was doing it (inaudible). And they moved from Newark to Irvington on Howard Street. So we had an apartment up in Irvington. Meantime I was doing the trucks, running ragged. I stayed going to Carolina for laurel, because everything was getting extinct around here because you couldn't go anyplace to pick laurel. (inaudible) my brother George, when he got married, he went down there on his honeymoon and snooped around, and

we got together and we were doing that too but he abandoned me. So I said, "We're going to still do this thing." In the meantime, I bought tractors and trailers, stuff like that, started getting away from everything else, just concentrating on this part of the business. So they came along and we had to leave New Street. My parents, I had always lived with them until (inaudible) apartment in Irvington. So he says, "OK." My sister didn't want my mother and father. My brother, well he was a big shot and I was (inaudible).

Q: Is this your brother George?

A: Yeah. Well anyway, so I said, "OK," so me and her got suckered into this thing here, and we bought the place on [Pascataway?], in fact we bought two places.

F1: One in Edison.

A: Yeah, one in Edison, a big house that was apartments. We had to use the money up there. So my mother and my father moved with us, and we put an addition on the house and everything like that, I moved all my trucks down here.
(inaudible)

M1: (inaudible)?

A: Right. This was in 1963.

F1: (inaudible).

A: So we settled there, and I put refrigeration and this and that, and started getting pretty big with this business again. My mother and father, "Oh, we are only going to be here -- we are going to be in Florida." So they left for Florida and we got a house in Florida. The old man, when he came up, he'd go out, help, you know, do deliveries for me, stuff like that. It was (inaudible), everything was fine. So we stayed there for -- anyway, until 1982, I got involved in a restaurant, a liquor business.

M1: And when did you actually come to this location?

A: 1983. '83. So what happened is, we always had our big problem. My brother got in trouble again, all this crap like that, he created (inaudible) my father says to my mother, "If I catch him now I'm going to kill him," stuff like this. He goes with Orgo, Orgo, a wholesale florist. And Jimmy [Demis?] and that, and they go to give me competition now.

Q: Your own brother?

A: Yeah. He beat me off everything, you have no idea. They failed. Everybody lost a lot of money, I'm talking big money, millions of dollars, they lost. I stayed right with it, tooth and nail. The next thing you know, they turn me into the IRS.

Q: Your own brother?

A: Yeah, the whole bunch of them. They burnt one building down on you, I lost the one car, I had a new Cadillac in there and everything.

Q: Where?

A: [Pascataway?]. Anyway, next thing you know, I had to do a little time. Because of that. She took care of the business. It was pretty well all fixed up, and I went when I wanted to go, it was a 90-day thing, I think I did 40 days, something like that there, you know. She took care of the business.

Q: This is for tax evasion, is that what they...?

A: No, it wasn't tax evasion. The guy came around, and I happened to know the guy from Newark, because the IRS office used to be on Washington Street and they used to park their cars in my parking lot. Small world, you know. Them guys was all right. Then they put this other guy, and he came around, he said, "Look, give me a few bucks and we'll straighten it out," so I bribed him. He came twice, and my mother happened to be back, and she said, "Watch that guy." So the next thing you know, the tapes (inaudible). He was sitting at my table, eating dinner with us. Anyway, no big deal, maybe it was a good thing that happened, it woke me

up. So anyway, the next thing you know, my father got sick and he passed away. Well, when my father passed away, they alienated my mother, which she took care of for twenty-something years.

M1: What year is this?

A: 1981, '82. So it (inaudible) they wouldn't come around there. My sister did, but my brother was forbidden to come around. So the next thing you know, they alienated my mother, and when my father died, they hit me with a lawsuit. My brother -- my sister couldn't.

Q: Your mother?

A: Yeah. They hit me with a lawsuit, millions of dollars --

END OF AUDIO FILE 1

M1: Testing, one two three, interviewing Bill Mavrode, part two. All right, this is -- here we go.

A: Well anyway. So where were we?

Q: Going back and forth to court.

A: OK, going back and forth to court. Well, the lawyer that I had -- I had him with the liquor store, we were silent partners. A liquor store and a restaurant, Hadley's in Middlesex. So it wasn't costing me nothing, them (inaudible) was running up bills like me, I didn't have to

pay no lawyer. (inaudible) we played with them, you know. The one day they went to court, they brought her up there, it was cold, and I told her, I said, if you see me go down in the elevator, just keep quiet, don't say nothing. So I pulled a faint-job in the elevator, the emergency -- well, that squashed it for another two or three months. You know, the old game.

Q: How could your mother face you?

A: She died, I never even knew she died? We don't know nothing.

F1: I don't even know if [Paskis?] even buried her, or --

A: So the story is, anyway, back and forth, back and forth, back and forth. Remember Charlie [Sakalis?], the iron worker?

M1: Yeah.

A: He was a -- you know what I mean. (inaudible) and he hated my brother so much.

Q: He was a what?

M1: Well...

A: Forget about it.

Q: I'm confused. Oh, OK, OK.

A: Him and Katina.

M1: Rikatina, the car...

A: Car dealer, his father (inaudible) on Central Avenue, had a little gas station on the sidewalk where the diner was. Anyway, my uncle Charlie stayed with me right to the thing, because he hated my brother. He says to me, "You want to get rid of --" like no no no, we don't need that stuff right now, just leave it alone. In fact, we went to the bathroom in the courthouse and George was in there, and he wanted to go in there and put his head in the toilet bowl. But anyway, it got real hairy. So finally my lawyer says to me, "We are not going to pay them one nickel. We are going to win this case. We are going to win it, we are going to win it, we are going to win it." (inaudible) when I first moved here, was here yesterday, we were big buddies. And every time (inaudible) put something up here, he'd say, "I've got this to be served." I said, "Well, you know how to file it, don't you?" He said (inaudible). I had to play games until we go this thing. So they finally got disgusted, so then they came down to \$800,000, then he came down to \$500,000, so -- and we are doing fine. They want to know where the money came for this, property -- so they got me for deposition, see after four years, they got me for deposition, so they says to me, "I have my aunt" -- they own a Stefan's Flowers and [Cedarhurst?] does all these big

Jewish weddings and all that stuff. Made a lot of money. As my mother's sister. And I was always her boy. I could do no wrong (inaudible). So I went to the deposition, they said, "Well, one property is in John's name." I said, "So?" John was over 18, he had the right to have property. So finally, "Look, if you don't answer these questions, we are taking you up before the judge," it was a court order thing. I said, "Take me up there." I gave him a hard time. Judge said, "Answer, or I'm going to put you in jail." I said OK, so we went back downstairs. He says, "OK. Where did you get all this money and stuff like that?" I said my aunt Stella, my mother's sister. "Your aunt Stella, who's that?" I said, "That's my mother's sister." "She gave you?" I said, "Yeah, she gave me \$500,000 in cash." "Where did she get it?" I said, "I don't know, go ask her." By the time I got home from the courthouse, my sister was on the phone calling my aunt, and she got her daughter. You probably remember her daughter, her name was Georgia [Stefamaka?], she ran the parades in New York for Independence Day. (inaudible) so anyway, she says to Georgia, she says, "Listen, what are you people trying to do?" Georgia says, "What are we trying to do? What are you trying to do?" She says, "You gave my brother \$500,000?" She said, "Yeah, we did." She says, "Well what are you trying to do, you're

trying to screw my mother up?" She said, "Why should I screw your mother up, your brother's been taking care of her all his life." And I said, "Well we just wanted a paycheck out of everything." My cousin Georgia says to her, "Listen, you god damn bitch." She said, "If you ever call here again -- and we're going to give him more money if he needs it." They never gave me nothing, but anyway. So finally, that night -- no, the next morning -- my mother's in Florida now. My mother calls her sister up, says to her, "What are you doing? (inaudible) you son of a bitch, you've got some nerve to take your kids to court," and all this stuff like that there. He says, "You're a son of a bitch," he says to her, my aunt Stella, "you ain't never going to get that money back from him." She said, "I don't care, and we're going to give him more money, and he's going to come and get more money, and if you don't like it, don't ever call here again, you're not my sister," and hung up on her. All my mother's family went against her. My uncle, everybody against her, nobody would have nothing to do with her. But they knew the truth, George had her put up to this to get some money. So finally the lawyer kept telling me -- in fact, he got very mad at me -- he said, "We ain't going to give them nothing, they aren't going to get nothing. And then we're going to sue them on top of it." OK. So finally

my uncle Charlie says to me, he says, "If we lose this case, we are going to have five or six partners." Am I right? He says, so, "Let's buy an insurance policy, so we agree to give them \$150,000 -- to my mother, not to them, and she signed off." So I gave them \$150,000, we went off on our business, and the more they did to me, the more I got. And that's what happened with that.

Q: Is your sister still alive?

A: Oh yeah, that was very interesting last year. She was married to -- you know (inaudible) they had the USS Olympia and all that? Well her husband was a nephew, and he was also their godson, and she was married to him.

M1: (inaudible).

A: Up in the what-do-you-call. Anyway, when my nephew was born in 1953, he was in the army to become an American citizen. I went to the hospital and got her out, my mother watched the kid, raised the kid and everything. We were still on New Street that time, '53. Anyway, they also stood up to my sister when she got married (inaudible) the whole plan came from all over, big money. Anyway, they lived at 1040 5th Avenue, 14th floor penthouse. So when the kid was born, she called me up. And when George was in jail, this woman kept

sending my mother \$100 bills in an envelope to help George.
That was the kind of people they were.

Q: The [Wulandris?].

A: [Wulandris?], right, Dali. I have a picture someplace with us. Well anyway, so what happened was, she calls me up, she says, "Listen. Don't go buy no carriage or nothing, I have a carriage from England that she (inaudible). And it's brand new, we never use it, come and get it." So I went over there, I went to 1040 5th Avenue. The doorman watched a car. 14th floor, and got the carriage. In fact, we've still got the carriage, it is upstairs here.

Q: How marvelous.

A: I still got the carriage.

Q: Save it for your children's children.

F1: Children's children are maybe too old already.

A: Well anyway, so I went over there, and at that time -- she always liked me -- she says, "Bill, any exclusive flower shop you want in town, you want to go in business, she says, I'll buy it for you." They were nice people, you know? So anyway, I took the carriage and I went back. My sister, finally about three, four years ago now, he divorced her. But he ran around a lot, anyway. I raised her kids for her. Me and her weren't even married, and we used to take them

kids and put them in -- what is it, Valley Fair now? School seasons and this and I used to buy everything for them, all this stuff like that. Now, my sister turned against me -- up to the last minute, she used to say, "Don't worry about nothing, nobody's ever going to bother you, that other guy, I don't want nothing to do with him, George and all that stuff like that." Well anyway, the next thing you know, she turned on me. They took my mother out of the house, and then they took her down to Florida and hired somebody to stay with her for a while and all that stuff like that. They left her there. In the meantime now, about last year this time, my uncle John came to see me. John [Parayal?], he used to live on Beacon Street. Anyway --

Q: No, it's the wrong side.

(break in audio)

A: Right near us where we have our home, see, there's my home here on the lake down there. So anyway, they came to see me. And John says -- "Don't even go there," I said to him. "No I gotta tell you this," he says. "OK," I said, tell it to me.

Q: Now this is your mother's brother?

A: No no no.

Q: On your father's side?

A: On my father's side. OK. "Listen," he says. "I saw your sister in an affair, a church up in Paramis someplace. And she came over there and she was crying. They took her money, the daughter, they built a house, and she was supposed to live with them, now they put her out because they house was too" --

Q: (inaudible).

A: "And they got her in some senior citizen's thing, they took all her money. The other guy took off, he's up in Buffalo someplace. And in the meantime," he said, "she's sitting here crying." So he said that she made the biggest mistake of her life to listen to her mother and go against you, meaning me. She said she never should have listened to her mother -- maybe I could have took care of her too, but she did the biggest mistake in her life to turn against me. I said, "Well you go back and tell her," and I told them the chosen words what to tell her, and I mean it too, sincerely. And the other guy, too, another guy called me up last night and told me he had a seizure or something on the highway about a couple of months ago, he's taking forty pills a day or something.

Q: My sister saw him in the store, the Greek store, and she says he looked absolutely terrible, he's not well at all.

A: Well, if anything ever happens to any of them, they better not ever call here, you can't blame me for the experience that they put me through. They engineered this whole thing for my mother, my mother was oblivion, but she wasn't oblivion because she did this all of her life with (inaudible). She my family divided. And our people are good people.

Q: (inaudible).

A: She used to tell me wife, "What do you want with that bum? He's a bum." Meaning me. Used to tell me I was a bum, I was no good, you know, all this stuff like this, she used to tell me, "Don't have no more kids with her, she's no good." Stuff like this, who the hell -- listen, it's a wonder I've got my sanity.

F1: (inaudible) all of these groups, they'd go out to the dances, the Greek dances and stuff. I said to her one day, I said, "(inaudible) tell me everything bad, now tell me something good." And her only response was, "Well, he married you."

A: I supported them all their lives. I mean, my father, when he quit, everything like that, I bought him vehicles. She inherited a little money, she gave him the money for the

house in Florida and all this stuff like that. It's very sad.

Q: It is very sad --

A: We're talking big bucks here. But forget the bucks, it's just the other thing. (multiple conversations; inaudible) But anyway, that's the story of us here now, and the other thing is we went to [Pascataway?], and we joined Saint George. She got involved with the Sunday school, then Father Papas asked her to take on and head the youth group, Peter was involved, too, with her. And while we was here -- now finally there was a little political situation and they tried to put her against the wall and she told them forget about it, you know how the politics go with the church. So in the meantime, Father Papas says to me up here one day, he says, "My cousin Anne, my mother's sister's daughter, we had her with us all this time. She turned against my mother like anything -- all of them, the whole family." Well, the woman got sick, and Michael found her dead. Anyway, so we buried her over here, and we had the restaurant at that time, I bought the restaurant from Paul and Peter at that time. The diner. In the meantime, Father Papas came up and he said to Ronnie, he said, "Ronnie, this is a nice county over here. And you need to start, and I'll help you, we'll

help you every which way to start a Greek church." That's fine. In the meantime, she did, and it was right before Christmas season, and she was having a meeting here, all the Greeks. They had the archdiocese coming from New York. So I came in, it was just getting dusk, and I had one of the big trucks, and I pulled it in the back, and I was -- I had to go to Pennsylvania, I was up all day and all night. I walk into my house and my house was full. And who was sitting there was the chancellor. Anyway...

Q: Which one?

A: Anyway. He looks at me, I look at him. (inaudible) his people were in the flower business.

Q: Oh, for heaven's sake.

A: And I used to see him as a young boy all the time in the flower mart at one o'clock in the morning. We used to tease one another.

Q: Son of a gun.

A: He says to me, "What a small world. This is you?" I said, "Yeah."

Q: He was hit by the car, right?

A: Yeah, with another priest. (multiple conversations; inaudible)

Q: But you know his sister, don't you?

A: No.

M1: She comes to our church, Westfield.

A: Well anyway. (multiple conversations; inaudible) Yeah. So he says to me, "What a small world. Oh my gosh." Then I called up my cousin Jimmy in New York, with a New York florist supply, because we all hung out over there, and he said, "Oh my gosh." And every morning this boy was there with his people in his flower market, one, two o'clock in the morning, and I'd be there, I'm loading, loading... Well anyway, he went ahead and gave her -- she's got all the old minutes, she's got everything. So they went ahead and they started.

M1: What year is this now?

F1: '87.

M1: 1987, that concept about finding a Greek church.

A: Right. So anyway, everything is going fine, but we've got to do something now to find a place. Who was involved here was your good friend, Anita.

M1: Delete that!

Q: I don't know who you're talking about.

A: He knows, he knows...

M1: Delete that!

A: She's a lawyer, and her husband...

M1: We've gotta delete that.

Q: We're not going to...

A: Anyway, I just said that to... So I said, "Listen, I'll tell you what." And I was in cahoots with this lawyer over here who was a Jew. And they had right there, by the medical center, a nice ranch-type synagogue with a parking lot and everything.

Q: (inaudible).

A: Real nice. So I said, "You know what, if you want I'll buy that so you can get started." Wow, she got off on her high tootsies there and she said, "No, we have to start brick by brick."

M1: This is Anita [Karlopus?]?

A: Yeah, you know who I'm talking about. So anyway, she got very indignant. I never said nothing to her, I said --

Q: Father George. Father George [Fennelis?] came.

A: Yeah, Father George Fennelis.

F1: And he was very happy with the property, he said, "Ronnie, my god, you could fit 100 people in there no problem."

A: Nice place.

F1: Had the parking lot, everything, but it wasn't beginning, and they wanted \$165,000 at the time.

A: No no no, it was more than that.

F1: No, it was \$165,000 at that point.

A: Was it? So I said, "All right, look, I'll buy that to get started." Wow, this and that, so I said ah, whatever. In the meantime my cousin Annie died.

F1: She got sick with the stroke?

A: She got sick with the stroke. My daughter got married. We got wished a restaurant. (inaudible) But nobody picked up the ball to keep this thing going.

Q: It went dormant.

A: It went dormant. She's got all of them, minutes and everything. She's got letters from [yamonos?] and the archdiocese and [yakovos?] and all that stuff like that, at that time it was [yakovo?].

Q: Father from the eastern church.

A: Yeah, father from the eastern church, they were all trying to get this thing together. In the meantime it went dead. So about five years ago, she says to me, "Listen." Four or five years ago. She said, "I'm going to do this one way or another." So at the time, I had thrown those guys out of

the restaurant, and the place was all set up ready to go again, so I said to her, "Well, I don't know what I'm going to do over there, maybe I'll sell that whole corner, because it's a very valuable corner. But if you want, take the keys, everything's in there, (inaudible) and just go ahead in there and meet in there." So they did, she got the ball rolling again. In the meantime, my son John wanted to do another restaurant. He had the one in Middletown. So I said, "All right John, if you want to do, I won't sell the property." We'll do this place. So he said, "OK", and he's an interior design, so he says, "Oh, we can't do it like this, we've got to do it like this." OK, so we renovated it, spent \$500,000 over there, whatever it was. We renovated it, and I said, "You can't be here no more." The meantime I had bought this big -- where the church is now -- to move in ourselves. While she decided she didn't want to leave the farm after we renovated. So I put it on the market to sell it. I said, "Tell you what. Go ahead and use that place and we'll go from there. Let's see what we've got in it, whatever it is, I'll donate half of it, and the other half, they've got to give me something." Which is no more than fair, right?

M1: This is three years ago, approximately three years ago?

Q: Three-and-a-half years ago.

A: Three-and-a-half years ago. Well, I had a contract for \$850,000, \$1,000,000, this and that. It's worth a lot more now, but anyway. So I left him in there, and that's how this got started. Now they've got comfortable --

Q: And we don't know what's happening. (inaudible) you know why, because I want to go back to Newark, OK?

A: But that's how this got started. And in the meantime...

Q: (inaudible).

M1: It's still going, Kiki.

A: Well, anyway, that's what happened over there. Now as far as Newark, my father was the founder of the Laconic Brotherhood Tenaron.

Q: These are the things I wanted.

A: Right, I'll tell you, I'll tell you all the names too, they're all dead and buried, but...

Q: OK.

A: My father, I remember just about when the year started, before the war started, Saint James was like maybe ten doors away from us on New Street, so they had a Laconic Brotherhood Tenaron on [manatas?], there was a lot of [manatas?] in Newark at that time. And this guy here was

the president (inaudible) but she was Greek and white. Her father -- listen to this --

M1: I remember her.

A: -- yeah, well anyway...

M1: She was pretty.

A: Yeah. He took off, he took the money and he went to Greece.

Q: (inaudible)

A: [Yerakari?]. [Yerakari?], his name was. The other Greeks wanted to reestablish this thing, they had the charter. So it was Peter [Yarakouris?] -- you don't remember it, do you? Anyway, Peter [Yarakouris?], my father was some (inaudible).

M1: Harry?

A: No. Anyway. And they got together, and they went up to Saint James, they held a meeting up there and they put this together again. And that's when the Laconic Brotherhood started, there was not a weekend that they didn't have a dance. They was all kinds of things, whether it was at the Continental Ballroom, or Williams Street, the thing, you know, whatever, my father was picnics, everything like that. My father would really spend a lot of money philanthropically, putting all this stuff together all the time. So that's what happened there with the Laconic

Brotherhood, and actually, when they broke Newark up and all this urban renewal thing got done, it was gone. Dino -- now Dino, your brother-in-law Dino, [Ginakis?], (inaudible) George with the fencing. Remember George?

M1: Right George. Well, Harry.

A: Harry with the fencing. Not the Harry from -- the other...

M1: Schoolteacher?

A: He was a schoolteacher and they had the fencing. Well Gus [Genakis?] lived upstairs, there was a [capanio?] on the first floor that was here from the 1920's, and then it was [Sarados Ladenakos?], his name was. He had a niece, her name was Jenny, a blonde-headed, she (inaudible back in the thirties and the forties. And she lived on Mercer Street, but anyway, (inaudible) on that house where Gus lived upstairs. It was a cold flat. And then they had the [capanio?] downstairs. The other [capanio?] was on Academy Street, across from the Queen of Angels church. The other one was where Aroma Coffee is, and then '52.

M1: West Market.

A: West Market Street, the one my brother has.

Q: So there were four...

A: Four [capanio?], right.

Q: OK. And just give me a flavor of what the [capanio?] were like.

A: The [capanio?] was -- the wives used to go out and work at Lewis Cigar Company. Most of the Greeks at that time, and the men used to go to the [capanio?] and play cards and drink (inaudible) all day.

Q: They didn't work?

A: They didn't work, none of them bums worked. [Halalagos, Karabatos?], you know what I'm talking about. Most of them -- you know, they hung out at the coffee house, and all they did was gossip and get into everybody's business. I stayed away from there, you know what I mean? And then they played cards at night. The heaviest playing place for the gambling was John Pathos has the [capanio?] where the Aroma Coffee is. John Pathos, very dapper, he's a dapper guy. You remember John, right Ron? OK. John Pathos. Mike [Parapolos?] was married to this Italian woman whose name was Jenny, she was a widow, and that's how Mike got in there. He was living with her. That's Mike Pastos' mother's brother.

Q: OK.

M1: Right, right, OK.

A: That's how [Paropolos?] and them were -- and then I told you, [Kifalis?] has the other one, he went to Greece, sold it to this guy Chris, then George started another place for heavy gambling. The cops were being paid off \$500 a week from the 52. In fact, the woman and her husband -- he's a cop, he worked for me driving trucks part-time. Helen, they live on 48 Magazine Street in Newark. (inaudible) That's all right, she ain't going to.

Q: No, we will not go to anything.

A: But anyway, Helen was in charge of internal affairs when Carlin was there, and she was the bag lady, she'd go around picking up the (inaudible) from all these places. And then [Spina?].

M1: (inaudible).

A: No, he became the director. He used to be on Raymond Boulevard with the emergency squad when they had one truck that time between Washington and Plain St.

M1: (inaudible).

A: Yeah, Dominic [Spina?].

Q: I haven't any idea, go ahead -- OK, I'm going to go back and ask you questions, and then you can give me later -- this is fantastic. And we will not use anything except...

A: No, nothing to get anybody, you know...

Q: No. The original point of entry for your mother was Lowell, Mass, right?

A: No no, the original point of entry for my mother was Ellis Island?

Q: Ellis Island, how about your father, same thing?

A: My father the same thing.

Q: OK, so they came through Ellis Island, he was taken to Lowell, Mass, because that's where the birth family was.

A: No, my mother wasn't. No, my father never went to Lowell, Mass. My grandfather and his two daughters --

Q: Went to Lowell, Mass.

A: Went to Lowell, Mass, through Ellis Island, and they all ended up in Lowell, Mass. (inaudible) OK, so anyway, they worked there, the daughters and my grandfather, they worked in the tanneries, and when the depression came and things went down, there was tanneries in Newark all around Colden Street. If you go to Warren --

END OF AUDIO FILE 2

M1: OK, go ahead.

A: All right, anyway. They left Lowell, Massachusetts, because the depression came and a lot of places were closing down,

so a lot of the Greeks that were in Lowell came to Newark, they went to work for the tanneries. One of the place that used to be on Colden Street and Warren Street, where the canal was -- right at the edge of the canal used to be a little tannery factory, and in fact, in that house, my grandfather's brother, Peter Mavrode lived there with his children.

Q: And where was the canal located?

A: Raymond Boulevard. That was the canal. That used to be a canal. But when I remember it, it wasn't a canal, they had just turned it into a road. And then we're on Colden Street, and New Street, there used to be a big plant up there, used to be Ephart (inaudible) was a pencil company. Yeah, there were little plants in there that I remember. In fact, when we left Newark, what's his name -- (inaudible) [Adonizio's?] brother-in-law, Benji, who was married to Ida [Adonizio?] was in charge of the demolition and the salvage for the buildings. Do you understand? And I had a bunch of guys stripping the buildings, and he used to get it kicked back, and at the Ephart-Farmer Company, we stripped that building. Oh man, the stuff we got out of there. We used to throw bathtubs right out of the window onto the truck. When they were wrecking Newark, everybody made money. But

anyway, like I told you now, they came to Newark, and that's how it happened. A lot of these people were there. The [Pokovalis'?] came from up there. That I know of, [Demetralakas?].

Q: [Karakas?] came -- yeah, I think the [Karakases?] came...

A: OK, now listen, the [Karakases?] I'm going to tell you about. They were in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. There was a Leon, there was a Jimmy, and there was a Peter. And they owned, on Federal Street, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the William Penn restaurant which is still there. Leon [Karakas?] was married to this girl -- her people were from Brooklyn, their name was [Boysias?].

Q: They are not those...

A: They're not that kind. And the old lady -- their mother was a Mavrode. And she was sisters with the [Sakalis?] from Newark that lived on Summer Street, Charlie's mother. And there was my grandfather's people.

M1: So it's different [Karakas?].

A: Different one, right.

Q: Aren't you glad, aren't you relieved now? You're not related.

A: Anyway, no no, they were nice people. Their children, my age. They were all doctors and lawyers up there, and I remember sometimes my father would say, "Come on, let's get the hell out of here." It was 1938, '39, '40, we'd go up there and spend the holidays up there with them in Pittsburgh, and we went from house to house, you know, naturally.

Q: OK, I'm going to focus you back into Newark, and tell me about the tanneries, the cigar factories, what else you mentioned.

A: All I know is that a lot of these women like Jenny Poulis, her sister, Stella [Konyaris?], which is Charlie [Konyaris'?] mother, and all of them that lived on Summer Place there on Summer Street, they all worked at Lewis Cigar factory. There was a [Postalakos?]. The butcher [Karises?] actually came later, the ones that are here now.

M1: [Postalakos?] that lived on Harris Street?

A: No, not that one, no. George, yeah, he had a daughter, Helen.

Q: Charlie Bernard?

M1: Peter?

Q: There was a [Postolakos?] and there was --

A: [Kostolakos?].

M1: [Kostolakos?], right.

A: [Kostolakos?].

Q: [Kostolakos?], right. They sent me something -- they're now in Ohio and none of them (inaudible).

A: Yeah, Charlie. He was married to the [Postalakos?] girl. His name was [Kostolakos?], Charlie. His father and my grandfather's brother's wife, meaning Sam's mother, were brother and sister. The one boy's name was Tarzan, they'd call him. He sold hot dogs, do you remember Tarzan. Anyway, they all hung around there at [Tapero's?] bar there on Warren Street. But they're in south Jersey, but Charlie moved away from here because --

Q: He went to Cincinnati, Ohio.

A: Yeah. My aunt -- yes. My aunt [Demetra?] Poulis, who was Helen Key Hayes' mother, was her godmother. The [Kostolakos?].

Q: Where did she work at?

A: Who? My aunt? They all worked for the (inaudible), all them Greeks do.

Q: And you mentioned the [Wiz?]...

A: Oh yeah. On Littleton Avenue, down from the hospital, from city hospital, before you get to West Market Street there was a plant back in there and it was the [Wiz-Scissor?] company. And after the war, when all these (inaudible) came up, that's when all these (inaudible) came, after the war, most of them. They all used to work in there, because my father -- they used to go weekends, and when they had time off, and go pick greens with my father, and my father, they used the clippers out of there. They used to get them wholesale and so on.

Q: What other business, what other manufacture...

A: There was Engelhart Industries. Engelhart, and I forgot to tell you this too, but anyway, when my wife did her (inaudible) and she became Greek-Orthodox, my brother's mother-in-law, [Zikopolos?], her name was. [Orania Zikopolos?].

Q: That sounds familiar...from Saint Nicholas?

A: Yeah.

F1: No, they are from Saint Helen in Constantine in Orange.

Q: Oh, OK, OK.

A: They was her godmother. And also was my son Michael's godmother. (multiple conversations; inaudible) Yeah, that was also my son Michael's godmother, too. But George kept

the firewood all the time, so everybody was at war with one another.

Q: How sad.

A: Yeah. One time -- we'd all get witty calls. I'll give you an example, one time when George was doing good with the coffeehouse, I said "Why don't you pay me the money, I need the money. You owe it to me. You owed it to me."

Q: Why?

A: Just because I owed it to him, I don't know why, that's the way he always was.

Q: Is he older or younger?

A: Younger.

M1: He's my age, we went to Greek School. What about -- ask him about going to school, Greek school.

A: OK, so anyway, what happened was I had to do something real quick-like. He knew about it, so he said here, my mother-in-law is sending you a couple thousand dollars, she's going to lend you a couple of thousand dollars, I said, "OK." Well anyway, little by little, George kept asking me for the money, so I gave him the money.

Q: (inaudible)

A: And her darling daughter who was on the same page with George, she was no different really, she came down one day, they needed some money, so I gave her the rest of the money. OK. So one day this guy comes around and he had some papers that George Mavrode -- Mavrode Florist supplied us, and I said, "What are you talking about?" He borrowed, with Wolf, a bunch of money. You know Johnny Wolf? He borrowed a bunch of money, and he said he owned my business. So anyway, I got mad and I called up there and the old lady answered the phone. She was very nice, so she said something to me about the money, and I said, "Listen, is your daughter there?" She said, "Yeah." I said, "Go on the extension phone and listen." "What are you getting at?" I said, "Just go on." So I said, "Alice, why don't you tell your mother that I gave you the money?" "Uhh." Things like this, every family has --

Q: Stupid. Just going to bring you back, OK? You attended school in Newark, right? You said Warren Street?

A: No. My father did Warren Street.

Q: Oh. That's interesting that your father -- OK.

A: Anyway, when I went to Kenny Garden, we was living on 19th Street and 13th Avenue. And where a hot (inaudible) by the cemetery, Speedway Avenue School, I went to that school, and

then when I left that school there is when we did the end term and moved down to Newark. I mean downtown Newark, New Street. Then I went to Bernette Street School which is behind Saint Michael's hospital, then from there I graduated there, went to McKinley which is next to [Barringer?] by Saint Lucy's church. And then from there we moved back up to 19th Street, and I went to 15th Avenue School, and I graduated the 8th grade and I went to Westside High School with Johnny [Bervakis?], Stella -- I went to Westside, in fact, when I was going into Westside High School, Jerry Lewis was graduating Westside High School.

M1: (inaudible).

A: So from there we moved upstate New York.

M1: You were at Westside with Michael [Ba?] or Phil Jeevis, was he here at that time? What year are you talking about, '47, '48, '49?

A: No no no, no no.

M1: '60?

A: No, I'm talking back in '44, '45.

M1: High school?

A: Yeah. No wait, yeah, first year I went, '46 I think it was.

Q: I'm trying to bring you back, OK? What was it like at school (inaudible) Peter. Did you hang out with the Greek-American boys, or any girls -- in high school or elementary school.

A: There was none of them there.

M1: They were all Irish.

A: The only one that was there was John [Bervakis?] and them, and they had their nose stuck up in the air so high that they didn't associate with us.

Q: OK.

A: (inaudible) he worked for Aroma Coffee, the father. He was the driver.

Q: All right. Did you belong to any Greek or American organizations?

A: Yeah.

Q: Which ones?

A: Well, I was down in Saint James, we belonged to the youth group down there, you know, the young group.

Q: And the Laconic Brotherhood?

A: Yeah.

Q: Tell me some of the activities that they had.

A: Well, the church, every Tuesday night we used to have a meeting down at the church, and we had gatherings, and we'd go out and so on and so forth.

Q: So you belonged to Saint Demetrius. Your father, from the beginning, belonged to Saint Demetrius.

A: No. We belonged to Saint Nicholas, but at that time Saint Nicholas didn't have a youth organization.

Q: Ah, OK, all right. So you all belonged to Saint Nicholas.

A: Right, everybody went down there.

Q: OK.

A: And then the Laconic Brotherhood, I mean, there was always something going on. My father had -- you remember -- dances all the time.

Q: And you were involved in all of them.

A: Oh yeah.

Q: OK, who were some of your Greek friends?

A: Greek friends? Well, the [Genakises?], the [Kifalises?], the Thomases, mostly everybody. These people here. Just about everybody.

Q: Did you associate it with...

A: Oh yeah.

Q: And what American friends did you have? Did you have American friends?

A: Oh yeah.

Q: Neighborhood friends?

A: Neighborhood friends, yeah.

Q: And what did you do with them? I'm trying to get a flavor of your...

A: We used to -- at that time, all my American friends around the neighborhood there, they didn't have any money or anything, I was always in business and so on and so forth, so I used to take the guys and we used to go to South Beach and Staten Island, we used to go to [Keansburg?].

Q: Well, I'm talking before you had money. I mean, when you were growing up, when you were in elementary school.

A: Oh, elementary school? I belonged to -- on James Street and Washington Street there is a big church, Doctor Clease. You know where Washington Park is? OK, on the corner. Anyway, I went to the boy scouts over there.

Q: All right. These are the things, you know. What was it like, growing up in Newark -- before...

A: Oh, it was interesting. I used to go to music school twice a week?

Q: Where?

A: On Broad Street next to Haines' & Co.

Q: With Griffith building?

A: Right, that was Robbie's music school. I went there.

Q: Oh, I heard you play the clarinet.

A: Yeah, I play the clarinet. My brother George played the trumpet, Spearo Poulis played the trumpet. We used to go there twice a week, \$5 a lesson.

Q: And did you ever play in any...

A: Not there, but when I moved upstate New York, in the high school up there we had a high school band, and I played in the band at the high school, and then we had parades like Memorial Day, 4th of July, it was a little town and we all marched in the band playing the thing, we would go to the cemetery for ceremonial things, and I played there.

Q: OK, what else did you do, growing up? Did you play cards?

A: Oh yeah.

Q: On the street, with your friends?

A: Yeah, I used to sit on the corner, we used to sit on our hands and knees shooting crap. On a Sunday afternoon --

Q: Did you go to church Sunday morning?

A: Oh yeah, I was an altar boy.

Q: At Saint Nicholas?

A: Yes.

Q: OK.

A: Anyway, yeah, I went to Greek school every day, never missed a day.

Q: These are the things that I wanted to here.

A: Yeah, here, right here.

M1: How many years did you go to Greek school?

A: I finished I think. Well, in between moving and all that stuff like that, but anyway, I went quite a few years.

M1: You went every day, right?

A: Every day.

M1: Every Sunday?

A: Every day.

M1: You were an altar boy?

A: Yep.

Q: And then you (inaudible) what happened after you went to church. You'd go home and eat?

A: Yeah, we'd go home, my father would take us out someplace, or we'd go home, or, we got home, my father -- at that time

the Holland Tunnel wasn't there, or the Lincoln Tunnel, and we used to go to my grandfathers, it was just go Jersey City, get on the ferry, and Washington Street was right by the ferry, we used to go over to my grandfather's all the time, or we'd go to Astoria, my cousin Annie, they owned a restaurant on Steinway Street in Astoria. And we used to go over there, and some weekends I'd take a subway over there, and I used to go over there and stay and help them in the restaurant and stuff like that.

Q: Oh, OK, go ahead, tell me more about your life growing up in Newark.

A: Well, I worked in the drug store on the corner as a soda jerk.

Q: You don't remember the name of drug store?

A: Yeah, Dill Plato's. Plain and New Street, it was a little one. You used to turn here on Plain Street and there was all the taverns, there was a lot of taverns around here. I used to get a quarter an hour. Then there was a Venetian blind factory across the street on the third floor, and he paid us a dollar an hour, so I went to work over there when I got out of school -- I mean I helped my people some, but I always liked to do different things.

Q: OK, you came to Newark, how old were you when you were --

A: I was born.

Q: You were born in Newark, OK. Where were you born in Newark?
New Street?

A: No, I was at Presbyterian Hospital on 9th Street. OK,
that's where I was born, and I lived on 356 south 19th
Street and 13th Avenue.

Q: Right, OK, and who delivered you?

A: Doctor Antonius.

Q: What memories do you have of Doctor Antonius, of the...

A: Well, Doctor Antonius, I had a lot of trouble all the time
with my ears, and every time they dragged me down there, and
he opened up my ears, in fact I've got a busted eardrum and
a scarred eardrum now because of that procedure. At that
time, they didn't know. The pharmacist, Pathos, he was on a
corner there, and it was fine. I had to go there, and they
took my tonsils out.

Q: Where did you get your tonsils out?

A: Saint Michael's. I had to stay overnight though, that time.
And then after that John [Kunyaris?] became a doctor, you
know the eye doctor brother. He became a doctor and he
teamed up with Doctor Antonius, and Doctor Antonius at that
time, he teamed up with John, and I remember in 1954, we

have seasons for this business, like in the red oak leaves, and we used to go, like maybe my father would have eight or ten guys, this guy [Sakalakis?] would have eight or ten guys, and some of the Greeks in New York that own flower businesses have eight or ten guys, and (inaudible) Long Island. Big old time hotel, dollar a night, you know what I'm talking about? So my uncle Jimmy [Sakalakis?] from Summer Street -- I didn't want to go out and do that, but he said, "Come on, give me a hand. Never mind what your father is doing, come out there and at least bring the truck in for me every night." Big job, guys used to come out of the woods every night (inaudible) bring it in and drop it off at Summer Street, come back out again in the morning, that was a stretch then, you didn't have the Long Island Express.

Q: Right, of course.

A: In the meantime, he says to me, "The oak is getting bad here. Why don't you go down to Barnacus?" See, I know all the spots because I was born and raised in that stuff. He says, "Maybe Jersey's better," and that's what used to happen sometimes, the warm would (inaudible). So I went down to Barnacus, and I stopped at this old Greek, he had a railroad car diner, his name was Jonas. So anyway, I had a pork sandwich, and anyway, I got back, I started feeling

crappy, so I picked up the truck and I went out that night to Long Island. When I got out to Long Island, on the way out there, I started getting the chills, the shakes, I was going bananas. Well anyway, I got the truck out there and all the Greeks were standing there and this and that. They had seen the truck there but they didn't see me. I went upstairs to the room, and I had the shakes and everything like that there, I was going crazy, shaking and fever and everything like that. So my aunt, she was always involved, she'd come out to the woods area (inaudible). My uncle Jimmy's wife, she came and said, "Billy, what's the matter?" I said, "I got the truck downstairs, but I'm" -- OK, so anyway, I got the shakes so bad, and I was burning up with fever. (inaudible) so she had her car out there too (inaudible) so my uncle Jimmy says to me, "You better take him and take him back to Newark, you can't afford to get sick out here." So she rushed me, got back to Newark. We were living on New Street then, and I was burning up and hurting all bad, so my mother calls up, and 12 o'clock at night John [Punyaris?] comes down. He says you better go right now to the hospital, you've got an appendix or maybe a busted appendix. But anyway, so he took me himself to New Street, Saint Michael's, went up there and he checked me in

there. Anyway, they started giving me some stuff, so who comes the next morning, Doctor Antonius.

M1: (inaudible) yelled at you.

A: No, no, he'd never yell at me, he was always nice to me. He said, "What happened?" so I told him. He says to John, "This guy ain't got an appendix to remove," (inaudible).

Q: Food poisoning.

A: Said, "He's probably" -- anyway, they couldn't get a finger on it, but the fever wouldn't go away. This was 1956, I just remembered now because I had just bought a new station wagon. Next thing I know which was strange to me, here it comes. My father's sister. Here comes the other sister. Here comes my grandfather.

Q: You were in bad shape.

A: Yeah, I was 106.

M1: (inaudible).

A: No. [Gostakos?], my cousin Peter.

F1: See, Peter was a relative of my mother's.

A: Well they were our relative too, anyway, I'll explain to you how. So anyway, couldn't shake this fever, I'm here for a week.

M1: Holy shit, that's high.

A: So finally they brought a rubber pool that fit to the bed, and it was this deep, and they filled it with alcohol.

M1: Keep the fever down, yeah.

A: And it finally cleared up.

F1: But they still didn't know what caused it.

A: Probably the food poisoning. Antonius came the day next (inaudible) what are you, nuts? That ain't him.

M1: He was a good doctor.

A: Oh yeah, Antonius was a good doctor.

Q: He was good to a lot of people. I'm going to bring you back. What was it like going to Greek school?

A: Greek school? I enjoyed it, we had a lot of fun.

Q: Who was your teacher?

A: The [papadia?] right here.

Q: (inaudible) and who was your Sunday school teacher?

M1: (inaudible)?

A: No. We had Father [Kostakos?].

Q: Oh, he did Sunday school?

A: He was a deacon then. He had just gone to the seminary. I used to call him Awkward Joe. See, I'll tell you how we

were related. His grandmother -- you remember his grandmother? -- well anyway, listen.

M1: Yes, yes, she raised him didn't she?

A: His father -- she was a [Koronakos?].

Q: His grandmother was a [Koronakos?]? OK.

A: The bread man, Peter [Koronakos?], was a John and Chris's father, they had three or four daughters. They lived on top of [McGance?] Tavern on Summer Street and Academy Street, upstairs. He was the bread man. He'd distribute all the bread, the father. He was a widower, he had his mother living with him too. But his sister was old lady [Kostarelenna?].

Q: Oh for heaven's sake.

M1: She was related to my grandfather, [Pablakos?]. His mother -- right.

A: Irene and them, yeah.

Q: Oh, you mean we're related too?

A: Anyway, so what happened is -- in fact, when the old lady [Kostarelenna?] died, they had moved to Denim Place in Irvington, New Jersey, and that was my grandfather's first cousin, and I went up to my grandfather and closed her eyes, I was there when she died.

Q: For heaven's sake. (inaudible) Terrible. But anyway, I'm coming back. Charlie [Kostakos?] died.

A: Charlie.

Q: [Kostakos?]?

A: From Ohio.

Q: No. No, Charles was in Irvington, John [Kostakos?] was his father, and he's living down the shore --

A: Oh yeah, OK.

Q: He just died. I'm coming back. What was it like going to school, the American school?

A: The American school, I went, I never was a real good student or anything like that.

Q: Any memories?

A: Na. I got held back one time, at Bernette Street. She held me back, and then the next year I was her first student, top of the class. I remember her name, Mrs. Warren, (inaudible).

Q: When did you meet your wife?

A: Huh?

Q: When did you meet your wife?

A: My wife? 1956, '57.

Q: And how did you meet?

A: Well, I don't know if you remember, do you remember on Howard Street and South Orange Avenue there was a family, [Liverakos?].

Q: The name sounds familiar but I don't know.

A: There was Julie, Stella, Peter, and Tony. Kramer's Bicycle Shop was on the corner, but if you went towards Springfield Avenue, there was some houses there, and there was one which had a (inaudible) and we used to go in the back. They lived there. Well, it just so happens their mother died when they were small. Her name was [Eftania?]. She was [Parayalis?], which was my father's mother's maiden name. OK, so the old lady [Dimitrula?] wrapped up in the black, and she raised these kids, Stella and all of them there. Well, it just so happens that [Eftania?] was my father's first cousin -- do you know what I'm saying? OK, it's a big circle. So what happened -- the old lady died, and uncle John, he's the one that's with the moustache, he's the one that did (inaudible).

End - William Mavrode